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Richard Paul Korf (1925–2016): A Celebration

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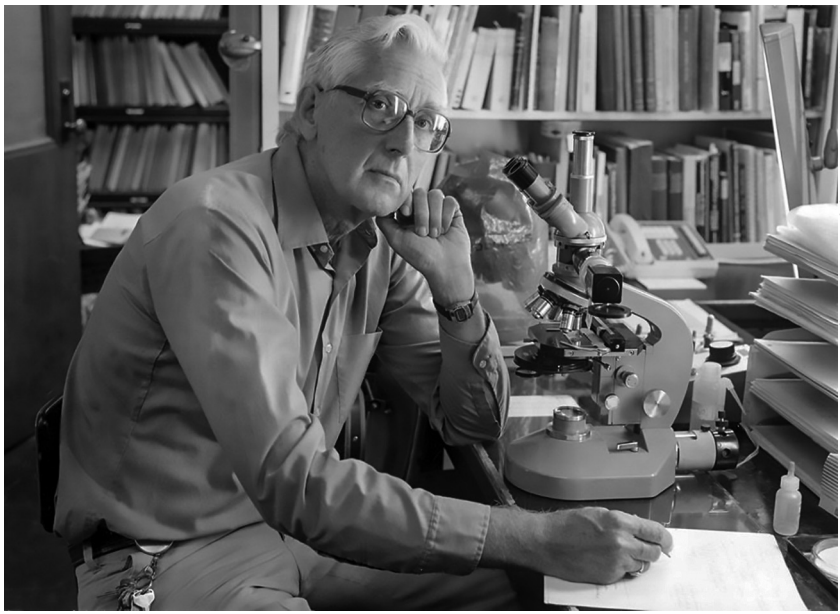
Ithaca Journal, December 9, 2016—"Richard Paul Korf, age 91, died August 20, 2016, at home in Ithaca, NY, leaving behind his wife, Kumi, with whom he was enchanted for over 50 years, and his adored children Noni, Mia, Ian, and Mario, and grandchildren Maïa Vidal, Zak Korf, Zephyr Gettelman, Mason Korf, and Matéa LeBeau. Dick's academic life began at Cornell University in 1941 at the age of 16, and he received his Ph.D. in Mycology from the Department of Plant Pathology in 1950. He taught one year in the Botany Department of Glasgow University (Scotland) before returning to his alma mater where he continued in his teaching and research until his retirement as an Emeritus Professor in 1992. Dick was elected President of the Mycological Society of America, received two Fulbright awards (Japan and Belgium) and an NSF Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship (Japan). He was offered but declined a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has received several honorary awards for his teaching and research."

Abstract—With this section, Mycotaxon celebrates the life of its mentor and co-founder, Richard Korf, who died after a brief illness at home in 2016 surrounded by his family and faithful companion, Meena. Materials from other publications and web posts accompany reminiscences by Dick's colleagues, students, authors, and family.

Preface: Eliciting contributions from friends and colleagues after any death is difficult, but arranging them into a coherent whole in a scholarly research journal established by the 'honoree' himself has proved doubly so. Those who knew Prof. Korf as 'Dick' submitted fond memories that amuse, inspire, and make readers wish they had known him better. His many contributions were so varied that we have chosen to cite only a few. Dick would undoubtedly be gratified that this collection of reminiscences is published more or less as submitted and forgive us for allowing his full accomplishments to be enumerated elsewhere; he would, however, heartily disapprove of my shameful use of material previously published or blogged elsewhere.

A complete scholarly obituary should include all publications written, offices held, organizations joined, and end with one sentence dispensing of family relationships. However, Korf's papers and books are listed on www.Mycotaxon.com/pubsRPK.html and the Richard P. Korf Wikipedia entry cites three genera and 16 species named after

him and outlines his formidable curriculum vitae, and so we opt instead to celebrate his life with an eclectic mixture of photos and fond reminiscences. Mourning the passing of our self-professed curmudgeon and in the spirit (if not the words) of Shakespeare's Marc Anthony, we all have come here to praise him.



K.E. Loeffler; courtesy of the CUP image collection

Fig. 1—Dick at his microscope in his Cornell office in 1985

Mycotaxon remembers

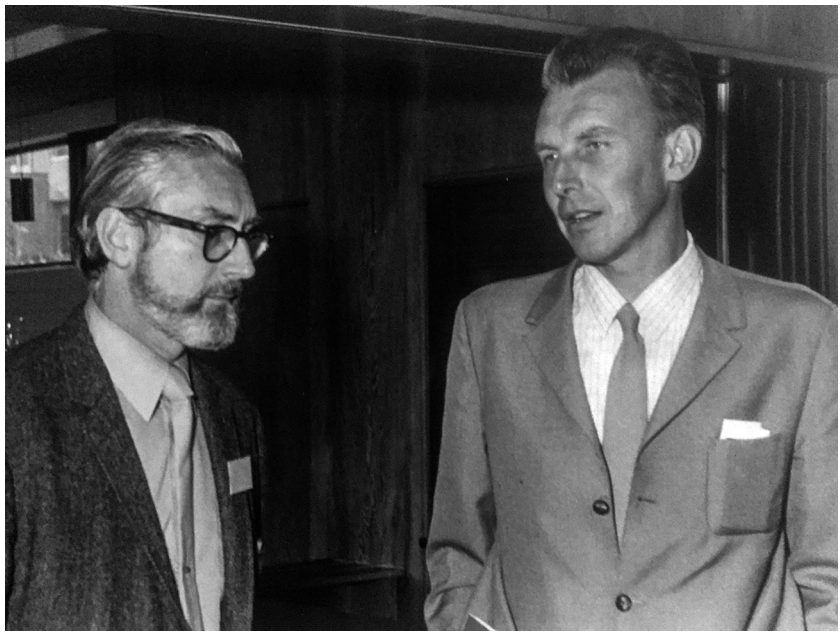
Not surprisingly, I first became acquainted with Dick through the colorful Mycotaxon volumes on the Oregon Mycological Society library shelves. Informed by 1979 OMS Foray guest mycologist Harry Thiers that we needed a species checklist, I had begun compiling a master list of Pacific Northwest macrofungi from journals, books, and reprints. The tedious page-by-page scrutiny of Mycotaxon prompted me to write to its Editor seeking some sort of index. By return mail a manila envelope arrived from a Dr. Richard P. Korf filled with a bundle of typed sheets covering the first 8 volumes accompanied by request for a quick return of this, his only copy, as he soon intended to publish a cumulative index (i.e., Korf & Gruff 1985). Researchers today—with immediate access to Index Fungorum, MycoBank, and the Internet—cannot appreciate the true value of what Dick so generously shared with a complete stranger whose only credential was an interest in fungi. It did, however, net him an appreciative individual subscriber.

I met Professor Korf in person in 1990 as a first-year graduate student. My supervisor, Joe Ammirati, dispatched me to escort our esteemed visitor across the University of Washington campus to the Suzzallo Library. Praising the Mycotaxon submission procedure, I thanked him again for his 1980 generosity; he in turn proudly spoke to Mycotaxon's success (despite dire predictions to the contrary) as a journal prepared by authors mentored by their chosen peer reviewers. We agreed that open peer review was peculiarly suited to taxonomy where the ultimate peer is the scientist who must test post-publication hypotheses and that delays inherent in journal-controlled blind reviews were unnecessary. (Needless to say, three years later my first research papers were published in Mycotaxon. Dick's acceptance letters, generally concluding with a kindly "Thank you for your fine contribution" were the source of much preening on my part.)

The 1991 Mycological Society of America meeting (my first) in San Antonio underscored the extent of Dr. Korf's prodigious mycological contributions. We chatted briefly before the awards ceremony where he received the Distinguished Mycologist award from a society that he had served as Councilor (1958–1960, 1965–1968), Secretary-Treasurer [and MSA Newsletter editor] (1969-1970), Vice-President, and President (1970–1971). Not confined to one continent, Dick

Noni Korf

Figs 2 & 3—Fathers of Mycology:
Fig. 2. Elias Magnus Fries (1794–1878), sometime after his 80th birthday. Fig.3. Richard 'Elias Fries' Korf (1925–2016), aged 69 in full Friesian regalia for a performance as Elias Fries at Cornell.



Chandler Photographers; Courtesy Amy Rossman

FIG. 4—Dick Korf chatting with 'Case' Bas at the
First International Mycological Congress at Exeter, UK, in 1971.

Amy Rossman

FIG. 5—Back in Eliasian fieldgear, Dick reprises his performance at Oslo's
seventh International Mycological Congress in 2002 and gives a big hug to Karen Hansen.

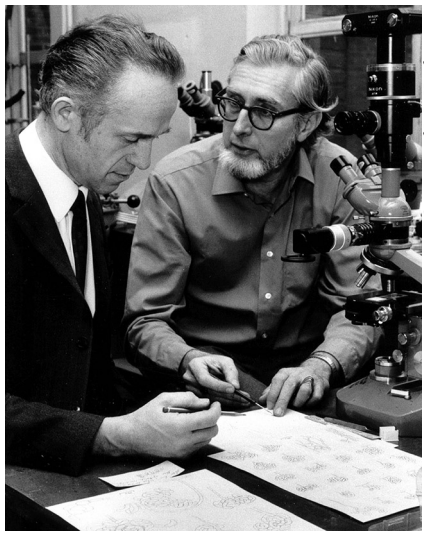
had also served on the International Botanical Congress (IBC) Nomenclature Section's Committee for Fungi & Lichens and was 1973-1977 chair of the International Mycological Congress's Standing Nomenclature Committee. An international force to be reckoned with, Dick received the Ainsworth Medal, the International Mycological Association's highest award, in 2010.

Back in 1994, I waltzed up to his 200-year-old Friesian persona at IMCV in Vancouver and, in an ill-advised attempt at humor, 'complimented' him with, "you really don't look as OLD as you are!" Immediately drawing himself up, he glared haughtily at me. I'm still not certain whether he didn't 'get' it or merely remained steadfastly in character. Whatever his true feelings, I promptly wilted and scurried away, abashed.

Fig. 6—The infamous "oh no, another erratum" cartoon shared by Dick

Despite his self-proclaimed status as curmudgeon, Dick (whom in 1998 I still addressed somewhat timorously as 'Dr. Korf') offered a sympathetic pair of eyes and amusing advice during my years as Inoculum Editor and MSA Secretary. On the heels of my second MSA newsletter, I received a cordial note with the news that Heinz Clémençon was associated with the University of Lausanne (not Lucerne) accompanied by a small cartoon to soften his proof that I was not perfect. This goaded me to establish an 'Embarrassing omissions, additions, and corrections' section, printed far too often to suit either of us. He followed the cartoon with later gems: [August 1998] "Nothing new to add, but on page 11 I learned that in 1988 Scot Rogers became a Department of Botany at the University of Washington. I'll bet he was surprized [sic]!" and [October 1998] "Dr. Richard Hanlin's proper first name is "Dick (as in Hanlin), not Robert (as in Heinlein)." My pleasure at his correctly kenning the source of my temporary confusion re Dick Hanlin did not, however, lessen my chagrin at misplacing the name of so amiable an MSA former president and friend.

'Dr.' Korf's phone call in 2003 asking me to serve as next Mycotaxon Editor-in-Chief left me flabbergasted. Thoroughly tired of deadlines, errata, and other editorial nightmares, I had placed editorships behind me. Despite the small honorarium, however, Dick's offer was too professionally tempting to refuse. It would be fun, I mused, to cobble together something for a change without having to write anything (ignoring former Editor-in-Chief Jean Boise Cargill's dry warning that Don Pfister's estimate of one day per week for her editorial work fell short of the mark). I mused wrongly, of course, but accepted Dick's offer and prepared by ordering my last few back Mycotaxon volumes.



Courtesy of R.P. Korf

Fig. 7—Grégoire Hennebert and Dick Korf plot out their new journal, Mycotaxon, at the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium) in 1973.

Mycotaxon was Dick's mycological love child. In his farewell to co-founder Grégoire Hennebert, who retired from our masthead after 32 years as French Language Editor (including 17 years as Book Review Editor), Dick proudly recapitulated the founding and evolution of their journal even as he worried over the economic feasibility of printed taxonomic publications (Korf 2007).

From its 1973 inception to 2016's thwarted free open access, the journal remained a source of joy and worry for its Cornell co-founder. After 'retiring' from active duty as 1974–1991 Managing & English Language Editor, Dick used the title Editor-in-Chief for his appointed successors—Jean Boise-Cargill (1991–1998), Pavel Lizoň (1998–2003), and me (2004–present)—who ostensibly handled the day-to-day production side. Dick nonetheless held onto the reins as chief Journal Preparation wrangler (1991–2004), Business & Subscriptions Manager (1991–2006), and Mycotaxon Ltd. Treasurer (1999–2015).

A surprisingly patient Dick projected two volumes of two 250-page issues for 2004 before returning in 2005 to four 500+-page volumes. That first year we imposed a cohesive Mycotaxon style upon the previous assortment of differing font sizes and styles and moved from print-ready pages and reviews mailed in by authors to computer-prepared files submitted by email. Although prone to fretting about overworking his all-too-willing new E-i-C, Dick was mightily pleased that we managed the changeover by the end of 2004, although we both despaired of making my overly complicated 'Instructions to Authors' easily understood by foreign authors and word-processing neophytes.

Dick granted his E-i-C complete freedom but did wistfully ask that we retain his journal's title and size. He needn't have worried. The name Mycotaxon is sacrosanct, and although a book format may appear outdated for hard copy, its smaller page size permits readers to scan a complete page on-screen without having to scroll up and down moving from column to column. (We did have a bit of a 'discussion' over my 2013 desire to shift the titles and sub-titles left from page center; but after checking other journal formats, he somewhat grumpily acquiesced.)

Nontheless, when his new E-i-C changed the unwieldy subtitle—An international journal for research on taxonomy & nomenclature of fungi, including lichens—to "The international journal of fungal taxonomy and nomenclature," Dick was 'thrilled' that Grégoire's and his journal now rightfully merited the word 'The.' He fretted that lichenologists might feel excluded until I pointed out that 'fungal' democratically covered symbionts, myxomycetes, and other fellow travelers.

Dick definitely encouraged my nabbing Shaun Pennycook as Nomenclature Editor in 2005 when I realized that adding nomenclatural research to author and reviewer correspondence, manuscript revision, and converting separate text and illustration files into PDFs was too much for one person. Shaun's volunteering to take over manuscript accession proved an unexpected boon and soon neither of us could envision the journal without him.

Dick was passionate in his desire that Mycotaxon survive without page-charges through subscriptions alone. [Whenever I asked whether Mycotaxon showed a profit, Dick would respond, "Occasionally," and then change the subject by telling me not to concern myself with financial matters.] It had long been obvious that rising postal rates would soon preclude our mailing heavy print volumes to subscribers. However, after he paid out of pocket what I considered an enormous sum to keep the journal solvent for one year, even Dick realized that our financial model had to change. Aware that the next International Code would permit publication of names online (see Norvell 2011), Dick urged the editorial advisory board and owners to move to online publication in 2011. They agreed.

Unfortunately, although less expensive than hard copy, online publication is not free. Webmaster and daughter Noni found an acceptable online host (Ingenta), but as subscriber fees still could not cover journal costs, Dick and Bookkeeper Hannes Maddens agreed to institute page charges. A highly distressed Dick, who had hoped to offer a completely open-access journal, discovered that obligatory open access fees were too high for many long-time authors. Dick was bitterly unhappy that a completely open access Mycotaxon was economically unfeasible in 2011.

Naturally two strong-willed editorial types did disagree on occasion, and there were definitely times when I felt the founder's axe poised dangerously close to my neck—usually when a quarterly deadline passed without a publication. Mycotaxon was founded on a prompt turn-around. Our moves to editorially prepared copy and rigorous scientific and nomenclatural editorial review produced countless delays. Predictably submissions lagged, due also to our newly instituted page charges, competition from an increasing number of online mycological journals, and in 2012 a "perfect storm" of editorial illnesses.

Our 500-page target proved increasingly unattainable; Dick felt that anything under 300 pages did not merit the term 'volume.' We eventually resolved this unhappy situation by changing 'volume' to refer to the annual publication of four quarterly issues delivered more or less on time. [It is sadly ironic that this paper has delayed publication of the final issue of volume 131.]

Fortunately such collisions were few, and I always looked forward to our weekly chats, generally launched with neutral weather and health reports before moving on to thornier problems, such as the discovery that for seven volumes Else Vellinga had been identified as "Bool Review Editor" on the masthead, and no one had noticed.

Dick also dispatched frequent pep-talks. To banish my doldrums over author errors, he wrote, "We started with the concept that errors were the fault of authors, not ours as editors/publishers. Any paper that requires editorial correction by you (as opposed to corrections suggested by reviewers) should be rejected outright until authors (or their reviewers) make their corrections. If the title is incorrectly punctuated or misleading or non-informative, I'd reject the paper outright till they get it right ... Your health is more important than always trying to be the best friend of folks who don't deserve your pains! Curmudgeonly, and simultaneously compassionately, Dick."

When after too many years of stomach-crunching deadline madness, he buttressed my decision (to correct only PDFs with editorial errors but not author errors suddenly discovered by the authors after conversion) with, "Dear over-worked E-i-C, Good idea. I think all author errors should appear in the errata; we will change only editorial errors in PDFs before publication. Their submission is what we print... Anything that will relieve your stress and Shaun's is an improvement. I also highly applaud a much stricter rejection option. Authors and reviewers both need to be made aware of their shortcomings. Fondly, Dick."

In 2011, amused by his body's commitment to fungi after the successful removal of a nasal melanoma, Dick wrote, "One bright yellow "mushroom" almost as big as a golf ball (but flatter) remains, holding the skin graft from my neck area in place while the blood vessels grow up into it and my nose becomes grafted correctly. Mushroom probably has to be there a week or so. Think I'll stay close to home for the next few days. Dick"

Ever the optimist, Dick always looked forward, as witness his response to his co-founder's condolences on our move to online publication. Grégoire had written, "I do not know who chose the cover color [black] of the last printed issue of Mycotaxon after 36 years of printed life. For me it expresses adequately my feeling receiving the last physical volume of your child. ...Now after its physical

death, its soul will continue a virtual life, only easily accessible and usable to illuminated minds." Dick responded, "The color choice is always Lorelei's. Her feelings were like yours about the death of the printed journal. I did not agree. I would have preferred some verdant GREEN or STARBURST to celebrate the journal being reborn in a less environmentally destructive format."

Richard Paul Korf was golden. Not to mention immortal, as noted by his former student and friend, Wen-Ying Zhuang: "Dick left us, but his contribution to mycology will stay forever."

Unfortunately, that doesn't mean we don't miss him—fiercely.

—LORELEI NORVELL
MYCOTAXON Editor-in-Chief, Portland, OR

Photos by Pavel Lizoň

FIG. 8 (LEFT)—Meredith Blackwell, H. Peter Kahn, and Don Pfister with Dick during a 1994 Cornell Hoot at the Ringwood Preserve, Cornell Botanic Gardens. FIG. 9 (RIGHT)—Former MSA presidents Robert W. Lichtwardt (1971–1972) and Richard P. Korf (1970–1971) with President Orson K. Miller, Jr., and Kumi Korf at the 2000 MSA annual meeting in Burlington, VT.

"I was sad when I heard that Dick passed away. Dick meant a lot to me. He was like a grandfather, mentor, and close friend. Even though I'm sad that he isn't around anymore, I will always have lots of happy memories of all of the great things he has done.

"I know I will never forget Dick. As I'm typing this at my desk, there are reminders of him everywhere I look. I'm typing this on my MacBook, which Dick got me hooked on after giving me his old Macintosh about 10 years ago. On top of the stack of mostly MYCOTAXON-related mail on my desk, is a bank statement for one of my first bank accounts that Dick helped me set up. When I look out of my window at my driveway, I see the forsythia hedge that Dick helped to pay as a housewarming gift when I bought my house. In the kitchen is the microwave he bought for my girlfriend and me when we first moved in together. On the kitchen counter I see bottles of Guinness, one of my favorite beers that I first tasted during one of the many times Dick took me out to eat. Hanging on our coat rack is my favorite old fishing hat that Dick gave me about 15 years ago. I still think of him whenever I wear it.

"These little reminders bring back lots of happy memories about good conversations and stories during long car rides, fishing and swimming, late night card games, and the many delicious dinners (like fish head soup) that Dick prepared. Besides happy memories, all these little reminders of him also bring back memories of all the good things I have seen him do over the years.

"I'm not going to spend hours writing about all of his kind and charitable acts towards me and other people. I'm assuming most of his students, colleagues, and friends must have experienced his kindness themselves. I just want to share Dick's greatest gift to me.

"Dick's greatest gift to me was his confidence in me. Dick's trust and confidence in me has given me so much self-confidence. Dick believed I would be successful in life, and he was always looking for ways that he could support me. He always encouraged me to continue my education, but when I wanted to work as soon as I graduated high school instead, he helped connect me with people who could give me a job. Maybe he somehow knew I would attend college the next year. When I went on my first date with my girlfriend, he let me use his Miata sports car. When I told him I wanted to try living in a cabin in the woods like Thoreau, he didn't tell me I was crazy. Instead he sold me a small piece of land he owned in Dryden. And, what I am most proud of is that he trusted me to help run the journal Mycotaxon that meant so much to him. I think Dick's generosity and kindness towards so many came from the fact that he believed in the goodness of people the same way he believed in me.

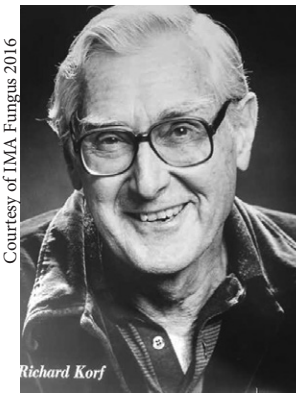
"I like to think that the kindness that Dick showed me lives on in me. Dick once gave me a gift membership to the American Civil Liberties Union (a charity I had never heard of), and now I am proud to support this and other charities that he introduced me to. At work, I enjoy giving students confidence that may help them get through school, just like Dick did for me.

"Like Dick, I am also trying to help Mycotaxon become an open access journal, or if that is not possible, I would like go back to allowing taxonomists to publish manuscripts quickly for free. Dick and I spent lots of time trying to decide whether to continue to allow authors to publish for free (this was how Dick ran the journal) or charging authors so that we could make the journal free to everyone.

"Even though Dick isn't here now, his memories, his generosity, and his many kind acts will always be with us."

— Hannes Maddens
Mycotaxon Bookkeeper & Subscriptions Manager, Ithaca NY

The Theatre



Courtesy of IMA Fungus 2016

Fig. 10—Dick's 1980 actor's promotional photo

Anyone acquainted with Dick was fully aware of his theatricality, but they might not have known of his real acting chops. Regarding this extra-mycological passion, friend and former Mycotaxon E-i-C Pavel noted (Lizoň 2016), "Dick was performing as an amateur actor both on stage and in the recording studio, and for few years he even served as the Chair of the Department of Theatre Arts at Cornell."

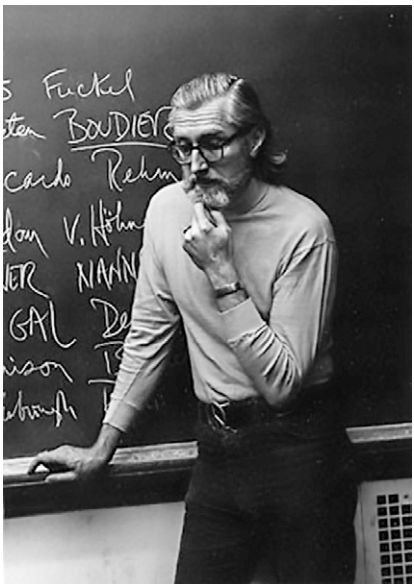
Dick himself explained, "My acting career began at an early age in Riverdale Country School in New York City, eventually being cast in major roles in three annual outdoor productions of Shakespeare's plays. ...The theatre has been my lifelong passion. I performed during my college years at Cornell University (where I later became a professor) and I continued, both on stage and in radio dramas. While on my final sabbatical leave before retirement I took a fling at off-off-Broadway performances of three plays while in New York City." (Korf 2006)

Ezra, Cornell's quarterly magazine, revisited Dick's participation in the 1946 production of a play on the founding of the college (Wilensky 2013): "Richard Korf '46, Ph.D. '50, Cornell professor emeritus of mycology, played 'Angus Dangit' in 'Once Upon a Hill' (one of his lines: 'Humph. Makin' a school outa Ezry's farm!').

Reprinted from Wilensky 2013

Fig.11—The soon-to-be illustrious Professor Korf as a hayseed peeks out at the audience (extreme stage right, second from bottom) in a 1946 Cornell curtain call.

"'It was just a fun thing to be in,' he recalls, noting that his dog also got to be in the show, wearing a Cornell sweater. He also remembers that there was a spittoon sound effect used off stage, which was 'used to emphasize some of our comments.'"



Howard H. Lyon; courtesy of the CUP image collection

Fig. 12—Professor Korf at the blackboard of Plant Science 326 lab in 1972.

Korf at Cornell

Amy Rossman and Wen-Ying Zhuang (2016) recall Dick's introduction to his alma mater and mycology. "Having entered Cornell University intending to become a gentleman farmer of Cornish game hens (as I remember it), he soon switched to mycology under the influence of Harry M. Fitzpatrick (1886–1949), completing his PhD in 1950. With the untimely death of his major professor, Dick joined the faculty of the Department of Plant Pathology at a relatively young age. He was thus the major professor for several students who were about his age or older. He started as Assistant Professor in 1951, and eventually served as full Professor of Mycology [at Cornell] from 1961–1992."

In his 90th birthday wishes, Pavel (Lizoň 2016) rightly referred to Cornell as Dick's life-long companion. "Under his guidance, more than 20 PhD students graduated (Korf 1991), the first three—Robert A. Shoemaker, Robert L. Shaffer, and Martin A. Rosinski—already in 1955."

The Cornell Hoot

"When hunting mushrooms, it's easy to lose students in the woods. That's why we practice the Cornell Hoot. Learning the Hoot is a highlight of the first Fall field trip. With students gathered round, I describe the exquisite art of collecting mushrooms, hand out crisp Cornell apples and maps, and demonstrate the Cornell Hoot: a rising "Ah-OOOT!" My students shuffle uncomfortably, but soon they can't help but smile. Now we practice together Ah-OOT! Ah-OOOOT! Ah-OOOOOT! Even the shy ones can't resist it. We do it again in unison, very loudly. A distinctive sound.

Fig. 13—Dick and field companions after a 1994 Cornell 'hoot' at the Ringwood Preserve, Cornell Botanic Gardens.

"I've wondered where the Cornell Hoot came from. I learned it from my predecessor, Dick Korf. Imagine my tingling excitement when I encountered this passage in the 1903 travel diary of my great-great predecessor at Cornell, George Atkinson, who was visiting the Botanical Gardens at Kew, in England: "As time for closing the gates came on I heard musical voices from different parts of the garden sing "all out, all out." A custom very old, and now it is such a perfunctory call that one can scarcely distinguish the words. It often sounds more like 'Ah-laio.'

"...Then I heard back from Dick Korf. He said 'Oh, it's the Cornell HOOT now, is it?' And he told me it was ENTIRELY HIS OWN INVENTION. Recent and local, not at all what I was thinking! It made me laugh out loud. But an enchanting story still. Here's his tale: 'It was when I was at Ringwood with one of my first class field trips, maybe in 1951, and noticed that all students had not returned. I thought it to be the loudest and most distinctive calls in my vocal repertoire. I am pretty sure it didn't come from one of the many plays I did as an undergraduate and graduate student, learning to project my voice, even a whisper, to reach the back row in the theatre, which Professor Alexander Magnus Drummond demanded of us.'" — KATHIE T. HODGE, Director
Cornell Plant Pathology Herbarium, Ithaca NY

Fig. 14—Dick chats with MYCOTAXON E-i-C Pavel during the 1994 hoot.

CUP—Cornell Plant Pathology Herbarium

Four days before my usually scheduled phone call to Dick, I learned of his sudden demise from Scott LaGreca, who wrote, "We are sad to share that Richard P. Korf passed away yesterday, at the age of 91. There was a small reception at Noni's house last night in Ithaca and I've never seen such an upbeat group, celebrating a person's life. It was heartwarming." Scott later added, "At a reception Saturday night in Ithaca, his remarkable family and friends raised toasts of Guinness (his drink of choice); remembered his generosity, humor, and wisdom; and sang his favorite songs." Below is Scott's formal contribution to our celebration of Dick's life.

Dick's many personal and professional connections have made our herbarium (CUP) what it is today. Dick contributed thousands of specimens from around the world to our collection. I work every day surrounded by those specimens; they are part of Dick Korf's legacy: thousands of specimens, as well as his notebooks and correspondence. Those specimens have people's names and places on them, which tell Dick's entire story.

My very first herbarium specimen (LaGreca no. 1!), also deposited in CUP, was identified by Dick: *Sarcosphaera gigantea* (Rehm) Kanouse. I collected it in 1989 after completing Dick's Field Mycology course. It was a hot summer day when I brought the specimen to him for identification, and I was shocked to see him shirtless in his lab: seeing my formal professor in such an informal situation was strange to me! But I quickly got over my surprise when he excitedly took the fungi from my collecting bag and started poring over his identification books, quickly making a slide to examine its spores. Later, he also showed me how to make the cups "poof" their spores. I'll never forget that day.

Right up until his death, Dick's collaborations with other scientists around the world inspired activity and growth for us here at CUP. For example: there was a mycology student in the Canary Islands (Luis Quijada) who had just completed his PhD in the systematics and floristics of cup fungi on the Canary Islands. Dick ran an NSF-funded project on Canary Islands cup fungi for years (resulting in many publications) and so Luis emailed Dick with some questions, which led in turn to his requesting multiple loans of Canary Islands specimens from us, which allowed (a) completion of his dissertation and (b) improvement of our specimens here at Cornell with Luis's examinations/annotations.

Another example: Madame Françoise Candoussau, a long-time friend of Dick's in France, has just this year decided to give her valuable personal herbarium (comprising thousands of specimens, mostly from Europe) to Cornell as a direct result of her friendship and longtime professional association with Dick Korf.

I should also mention that Dr. Korf was innovative in his teaching. At a time when team-teaching was almost unheard of, he divided the work of his Introductory Mycology class, inviting specialists of different groups of fungi to teach for different weeks. Dick himself taught the first half of the course, while other, 'guest' teachers took over the last half of the course. This allowed for a more thorough mycology education for his grateful students. I know this sort of thing is commonplace now, but at the time (25 years ago—1991) this was a rare thing.

After I left Cornell and came back to work here with a PhD in lichenology, I joked with Dick that he'd inadvertently turned me into a lichenologist because he always dismissed any lichen specimens that students (including me) brought him. "Lichen!" is all he would say, tossing the specimen aside. I found it fascinating that such a great mycologist had such a poor opinion of (and lack of interest in) lichenized fungi, and this spurred me on to learn more. So in an indirect way, I credit Dick for inspiring my career as a lichenologist.

—Scott LaGreca, Curator
Cornell Plant Pathology Herbarium, Ithaca

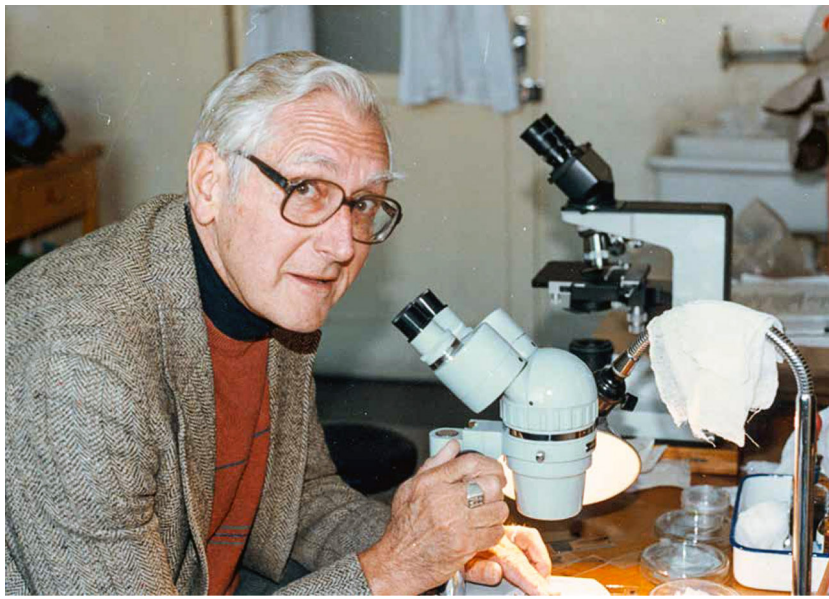
Dobbin 2009 (AP photo)

Fig. 15—Professor Emeritus Richard P. Korf, CUP Director Kathie Hodge, and Curator Robert Dirig pose with some specimens from Cornell's Fungi of China collection in 2009.

From China to CUP and back again

"Shu Chun Teng traveled halfway around the world on a scholarship to study mycology at Cornell University in 1923. He left five years later with a knowledge of fungi unequaled in China, then spent the next decade traveling on horseback gathering up molds, lichens, yeasts, rusts and morels in the forests, fields and marshes of his homeland. ...During the Japanese invasion in 1937, Teng arranged for his best specimens to be removed from a national botany institute he directed in Nanking to save them from destruction. During World War II, they were smuggled by ox cart to Indochina and then by sea to the United States, and 2,278 of the specimen packets ended up at Teng's alma mater.

"At Cornell's initiative, the university is dividing up and sharing its Fungi of China Collection with the Academy of Sciences in Beijing to help advance the



Wen-yen Zhuang; Courtesy of IMA Fungus 2016

Fig. 16—Dick at the microscope in 1988 at the Key Laboratory for Systematics & Microbiology in Beijing.

exploration of fungal species. ...In a repatriation ceremony Monday, Cornell President David Skorton presented a high-level Chinese delegation with a rare mushroom called *Lentinus tigrinus,* reaffirming the university's desire to share a collection he said it 'has held in safekeeping for the global scientific community since 1940.' ...Some 1,700 specimens will be delivered to China in the fall, including 57 considered irreplaceable. Cornell will retain fungi that can't be divided, but make them available to scholars.

"...At the start of the devastating Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, Teng was tagged as a 'counterrevolutionary academic authority.' Discharged from his lab, he was subjected to daily beatings and mental persecution that ruined his health and career, according to the science academy. He died in 1970 at age 67. Years later, his family managed to recover Teng's confiscated manuscripts. His daughter, Rosaline Deng, worked with a Cornell professor of mycology, Richard Korf, to complete and publish The Fungi of China in 1996 (Teng 1996).

"Transferring the fungi 'is our decision,' said the 83-year-old Korf, who taught at Cornell until 1998. 'The whole reason really is that it makes scientific sense, especially with the warming of U.S.-China ties over the last 30 years. ...It's clear we are cooperating in ways we never knew we could.'

"'Another impulse ... is I had a brilliant student, Wen-Ying Zhuang, come to work with me from China in the 1980s and get her Ph.D. She became a major figure in the Chinese mycological field. She certainly pressed me on how important it would be for Chinese scientists to be able to easily access those specimens.'" —Ben Dobbin, Associated Press (Dobbin 2009)

Wen-yen Zhuang;

Fig. 17—Seeing the sights on the way home from the 1986 MSA Annual Meeting in Gainesville, Florida.

Students and Fellow Travelers

"Dick obviously enjoyed his students, believed in them, and wanted them to be successful. As such he encouraged them to attend scientific meetings doing whatever he could to ensure that they managed to get there. This included towing his own pop-up camper staying with his students in a campground near the meeting site." —Rossman & Zhuang (2016)

"One of the world's most notable mycologists of all times died on August 20, after ninety-one years of a well-lived life.

"Dick Korf, Professor at the Plant Pathology Department at Cornell University, was a leading figure in the study of discomycetes (*Leotiomycetes* and *Pezizomycetes*) and a mentor to many in this field. Not only did he convey his love and appreciation of fungi but also taught us the importance of rigorously studying the morphology of fungi and their role in nature and the environment.

This came with hours of hours of observations of each specimen under the microscope, methodically recording morphological and anatomical features and chemical reactions. He always brought an inquisitive mind, teaching us to formulate questions, to doubt dogma and try to answer questions with rigor. At the same time he taught us the intricacies of nomenclature, again with rigor.

"The first issue of Mycotaxon, a journal founded by him, dedicated to the taxonomy and nomenclature of fungi, came out in 1974. It is today in its volume 131 and has been a leading journal for descriptive mycology.

"Dick was an advocate for social justice, cared for others, and helped many in need.

"Today is a sad day for his family, to whom he was completely devoted. It is a sad day for us, his students, and for the many that he mentored, advised, and helped through his well-lived life as a caring person and as an eminent mycologist."

— Teresa Iturriaga

MSc (1983), PhD student (1990) Cornell, under R.P. Korf

Courtesy IMA Fungus 2014

Satoshi Inoue

Fig. 18 (left)—Dick, Linda Kohn (student & future 1999–2000 MSA president), Trond Schumacher (future 2000–2006 IMA president), and Japanese colleague in 1983 at the Sanshi Imai Memorial Discomycete Foray after IMC3 in Nikko, Japan. Fig. 19 (right)—Kumi and Dick at Satoshi and Harumi Inoue's wedding at Cornell's Stadler Hotel on September 25, 1995

"When I entered Department of Plant Pathology of Cornell University as a graduate student in 1990, Dick was one of a few professors I met during my orientation days. I had graduated from Tohoku University in Sendai in 1981 with Agrimony background and didn't know much about Mycology. Our conversation was not so much at that time yet.

"I started my M.S. degree with Dr. Jim Aist and selected Mycology as my major. One for that decision was that I did not want to take a course "Sadistics" (statistics).

"I ended up taking almost of all the courses offered by Dick during my M.S. degree period. One of the toughest courses that I have ever taken is Advanced Mycology (PL PA 739) during the 1992 fall semester. The TA for the class was Julie Carroll and my classmates were Linda Hanson, Ker-Chun Kuo, and Kathie

Hodge (who is currently teaching Mycology at Cornell). Dick gave us a very strange project and we struggled to collect and identify ten (10) uncommon species of hyphomycetes.

"I obtained my M.S. degree and entered my Ph.D. program in 1993. In 1995, just after I passed my A-exam, I married Harumi. We moved to Dick and Kumi Korf's apartment and lived there for two years until I obtained my Ph.D. and returned to Japan. Our son, Amane, was born there in 1996. We spent a very happy time with Dick's family and have beautiful memories of them. I remember it as if it were just yesterday.

"With my deepest sympathies on the death of Dick."

Satoshi Inoue, PhD (1997), Cornell under R.P. Korf
Director of Forage Seed Department, Kaneko Seeds Co. Ltd., Japan

"When I was a senior at Colgate, I was assigned the task of "refreshing" cultures of *Rhizopus nigricans* to restore their ability to form zygospores. Knowing nothing about a process to accomplish this, I wrote to Korf at Cornell, who kindly sent me two new cultures and a method to demonstrate zygospore development.

"And so it was that I applied to Cornell and entered in Fall 1956. My intention was to perform taxonomy on jelly fungi, but I suffered a self-inflicted wound when I skipped numerous labs in Plant Path 1 and earned a C in the course, which violated Cornell's dictum of grades of Bs or better for continued enrollment. I was informed that while I might eke out a master's degree, I surely would not be allowed to continue thereafter.

"Thus it was that I enrolled at Columbia University under Lindsay Olive. And the rest is history. In one of my rare subsequent meetings with Dick Korf, he referred to me as "the one that got away."

"Although Dick was not high on the marquee in his last years, his name will surface for generations as the co-founder of Mycotaxon, discomycete taxonomist, and outstanding personality in the mycological community."

—Ron Petersen. Professor Emeritus & MSA President (1993–1994)
Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Tennessee

"Dick Korf was instrumental in my existence as a mycologist. In 1970 I was a floundering second year graduate student in mycology with no real idea of a research project or direction. Dick wrote to my major professor, Bill Denison (a student of Dick's) at Oregon State University, inviting him on a collecting trip in Puerto Rico and Dominica. Bill couldn't go, but I jumped at the chance. That trip was magic, and I met my lifelong friend Don Pfister. During the day we groveled in the litter finding tiny discomycetes as well as heaps of delightful yellow and red perithecia and black, twig-like xylarias. In the evenings we crowded around the microscope attempting to identify them at least to genus.

Wen-yen Zhuang, courtsy of IMA Fungus 2010

Fig. 20—Newly installed MSA President Amy Rossman with Richard 'Elias Fries' Korf at IMCV, Vancouver, BC (Canada) in 1994.

Later I learned, at least for the nectria-like fungi, that, no, I wasn't stupid, there really were no keys to tropical species, and that was the inspiration for research on these fungi.

"The home of Dick and his wife Kumi was always open to itinerant mycologists even when their four children were small. Although chaotic during the day, Dick would rise early in the morning to work on Mycotaxon in those quiet hours. He was totally supportive of graduate students and postdocs writing glowing letters of recommendations—perhaps tapping into his creative writing tendencies! But they worked, as most of us found good jobs in the always-tough mycological employment marketplace. He shared his time and resources, always willing to stop his own work to discuss nomenclature issues or read over a draft manuscript."

— Amy Y. Rossman
Oregon State University, Corvallis

Amy Rossman (IMA Fungus 2016)

Fig. 21—Kumi & Dick at Amy Rossman's home in Beltsville in 2000.
Fig. 22—At Amy's in 2005: mmmm ... roast quorn!

Fungal taxonomy and nomenclature goes international

These messages and reminiscences are organized alphabetically by country.

Vale Dick Korf

Sad news about the passing of Dick Korf

Among his numerous contributions to mycology, Dick Korf was Secretary of the NCF (then the Committee for Fungi and Lichens) in the 1980s and co-founder and long-time supporter of Mycotaxon.

Two enduring images are early career Korf at the blackboard (note the peace sign belt buckle in Fig. 12): and later, channeling Elias Fries.

— Tom W. May, Secretary, IBC Nomenclature Committee for Fungi
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

We regret so much for Dick Korf.

We'll always remember him for his great mycological contributions and inspiration.

— Francisco Calaça
Lab. de Biodiversidade do Cerrado - Fungos Coprófilos
Unidade Universitária de Ciências Exatas e Tecnológica, Anápolis, Brazil

Dick's passing marks the end of an incredible career and great loss for mycology. I thank him for his friendship and kindly guidance and send my sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

—Scott Redhead, Curator, DAOM
Agriculture & Agri-food Canada, Ottawa

Dick began his association with the Institute of Microbiology (Chinese Academy of Sciences) in Beijing and had worked hard to promote Chinese mycology, especially through publishing major books on fungi through Mycotaxon (IMA 2013).

In China, "an 88th birthday is regarded as particularly special, and those that reach it are called "Mi-shou". In honour Dick's attainment of "Mi-shou" status, the June 2013 issue of Mycosystema (on whose editorial board Dick served since its founding in 1987) was dedicated to him (IMA 2013). The excellent photos of Dick's 1988

Wen-ying Zhuang (IMA Fungus 2016)

Fig. 23—Dick at the Jinzhong temple in Yunnan, China (1988)

Wen-yen Zhuang

Korf in China in 1998. Fig. 24 (left): Before Tanzhesi temple in Beijing.
Fig. 25 (right): searching lily pads at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Gardens.

visit to China (Figs 23–25) were captured by Wen-ying, his student and much-valued colleague and close friend.

—Wen-Ying Zhuang,
Key Laboratory of Systematic Mycology & Lichenology
Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

Courtesy of Pavel Lizoň

Fig. 26—The discomycete team at IMC7 outside the Oslo convention center in 2002.

Courtesy of Rafael F. Castañada-Ruíz

Fig. 27—Marc Stadler (Germany), José Guarro (Spain), Teresa Iturriaga (Venezuela), Dick (USA), and Rafael Castañeda-Ruíz (Cuba) represent three continents at the 2011 Latin American Mycological Congress in Costa Rica.

I have received the terrible news from Teresa Iturriaga. Please pass my condolences to the family of Richard Korf and share this photo (Fig. 27) of Dick with friends at the 2011 Latin American Mycological congress in Costa Rica. Un abrazo, Rafael

—Rafael F. Castañeda-Ruíz
Fundamentales en Agricultura Tropical "Alejandro de Humboldt",
Santiago de Las Vegas, Cuba

It has just come to my attention that Richard Korf, co-founder of Mycotaxon, has passed away on Aug. 20th. Please accept my sincere condolences for an outstanding mycologist and a visionary who will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the all-time greats in mycology.

—Michael Loizides
Cyprus Mycological Association, Limassol, Cyprus

Nobody like Dr. Korf, so professional, so enthusiastic of small discomycetes, but most of all, a good person. We will never forget him.

—Rosario Medel Ortiz, Instituto de Investigaciones Forestales
Universidad Vercruzana, Vera Cruz, Mexico

Dear Dick

I first met you when you visited me when I was working in the University of Hong Kong in the mid nineties. You were so generous and supportive of my work at the time and gave me encouragement to continue my efforts

The next time I met you was at the International Mycological Congress in Norway. You found it so funny that I did not recognize you dressed up as that 'other' famous scientist.

Since then you have always been so supportive and provided advice and encouragement.

I will dearly miss you.

—Kevin David Hyde
Editor-in-Chief, Fungal Diversity
Director, Center of Excellence in Fungal Research
Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Was so sad to learn of the passing of Dick. He was hugely influential in mycology. Truly one of the greats of the 20th century.

—David W. Minter
President, International Society of Fungal Conservation
Egham, Surrey U.K.

Dick was inspirational and I shall make sure that the BMS office knows. I had a lovely dinner with him in Louvain in the late 1990's and I certainly valued his help, advice, and support.

—Anthony J.S. Whalley
School of Biomolecular Sciences
John Moores University, Liverpool England U.K.

I first met Dick at IMC1 at Exeter (UK) in 1971. I had joined the Commonwealth Mycological Institute two years before, and this was my first exposure to the international mycological community. I especially remember a discussion on nomenclature he chaired, and which led to the establishment of a Nomenclature Secretariat under the auspices of the IMA. He was especially concerned about the problems due to the later starting point for names of non-lichenized fungi, including publishing a series of papers he characteristically entitled 'Later starting point blues;' the rules were changed in 1981. As Secretary of the Nomenclature Committee for Fungi, he played a major role in debates at International, Botanical Congresses, representing mycological interests, where his acting skills were often put to good effect.

His love of fungi and fieldwork inspired not only his many graduate students, but also many others throughout the world, especially tropical areas still so little known for discomycetes. I was pleased to recognize this a little when introducing *Korfiomyces* (along with Teresa Iturriaga) for a little disco from Venezuela that had puzzled him. Perhaps the most important thing I learned from my contacts with Dick was the importance of always being fully aware of the historical background of issues and thoroughly researching the consequences of any contemplated actions. We did not always agree on controversial matters, but always respected each other's views.

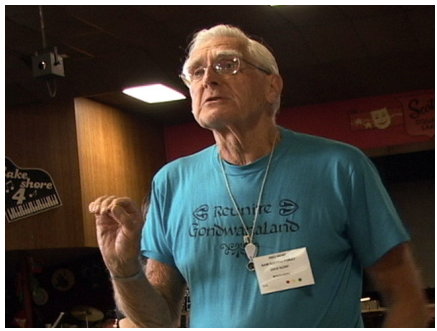
His foresight in establishing Mycotaxon to address a then developing log-jam in getting systematic mycology papers in print, with the innovative requirement for authors to produce their own camera-ready copy, was an enormous stimulus to the health of the subject. He was a most generous man, and kindly 'loaned' me a set of the printed volumes after I left the International Mycological Institute at the end of 1997. The neat rows of brightly coloured volumes, which I repeatedly have to consult, are an incredible legacy.

Dick was always keen to promote mycology selflessly throughout the world, not least in China where he helped safeguard collections, get several major

works published, and was one of a small group 'foreign' mycologists involved in the establishment of Mycosytema prepared by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which has now also grown into a major journal in the region.

An inspirational mycologist who touched the lives of numerous mycologists around the world, many of whom came to occupy significant positions. The carefully executed works from their ongoing research—and of those they in turn train and inspire—that have the stamp of Dick's concern for accuracy and quality will be a self-perpetuating memorial. I feel privileged to have known him, and would have loved to have been able to spend more time benefitting from his vast experience and insights. —David L. Hawksworth

Comparative Plant and Fungal Biology, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, U.K. &
Department of Life Sciences, Natural History Museum, London, U.K.



Diane Smith; NEMF foray website

Fig. 28—Dick, wearing his 'Reunite Gondwanaland" t-shirt, makes a fine point at the 2003 New England Mycological Foray (NEMF) in Deposit, NY. Of the 24 species he identified, five were new to the 27-year old NEMF master list.

My first acquaintance with Dick Korf was as a new member of Mycological Society of America in the early 1960's. He and Clark Rogerson literally WERE the MSA. He had an imperious personage—handsome, self-confident, theatrical, and well spoken. He seemed initially remote from young mycologists, but accepted them as colleagues over time. I was flattered when he asked me to be a founding member of the editorial board of Mycotaxon, a position that I enjoyed for many years.

Dick was a consummate teacher of mycologists. He took them on field trips to places that seemed exotic to a small-town man. His former students are among the leaders of mycology—Jim Kimbrough and Don Pfister among many others. He was also a teacher at MSA meetings—quizzing students and professionals on details of their studies and offering advice on improvements.

It was as perhaps nomenclaturist that he was most widely known. He spent much of his time solving nomenclatorial problems for colleagues worldwide. He was dismayed with massive changes in the mycological part of Code of Botanical Nomenclature and I suspect that, had he been younger and

healthier, that he would have used his vast intellect and assertiveness to prevent the most irrational changes.

Let us praise this great scholar! Mycology is poorer without him and we shall never see his like again.

— Jack Rogers,
Professor Emeritus & (1977–1978) MSA President
Washington State University, Pullman, WA U.S.A.

The Lion in Winter

Except for a 1950–1951 tour as Lecturer at Scotland's University of Glasgow, Dick devoted his entire research life to Cornell. His heart, however, belonged to his family, and an impressive one it is. In its praise of "Hidden Books: the art of Kumi Korf"" (2011), the National Museum of Women in the Arts refers to Kumi as "one of the most original artists in the United States." Works by Dick's wife have been exhibited worldwide and (of the 25 collections cited) include the Library of Congress, Harvard's Houghton Library, the New York Public Library, London's Victoria and Albert Museum and Tate Library, Hungary's Savaria Múzeum, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. He and Kumi are the proud parents of Mia (an American film and television actress), Ian (Associate Director of Bioinformatics at UC Davis), Ian's twin Mario (Principal Technical Writer at Akamai Technologies), and Noni (Director of Learning Innovation & Design at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor). On his retirement, Dick obviously basked in the glow of his family's creative energies.

"During his stay at the Yokohama National University (1957–58) as a Fulbright fellow, Dick met and

Courtesy of Pavel Lizoň

Mia Korf; reprinted from Wilensky 2013

Fig. 29 (above). Dick & Kumi at home in Ithaca with Pavel in 2005. Fig. 30 (below). Dick relaxing during the summer of 2013.

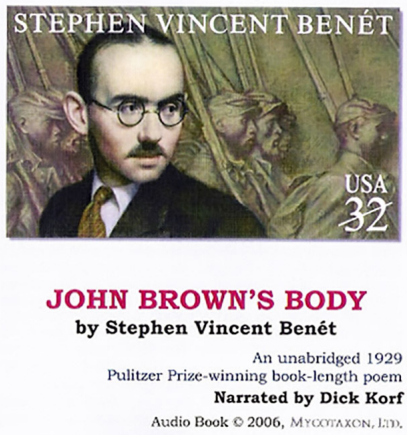
married Kumiko Tachibana. Kumi graduated in architecture and later printmaking at Cornell. She is very active as a visual artist to this day." (Lizoň 2016)

Courtesy of Pavel Lizoň

Fig. 31—1993–1998 Mycotaxon E-i-C & close friend Lizoň chats with Dick in Ithaca in 2005.

"Exe Island on Big Rideau Lake in Canada was purchased by the Korfs in 1972 (later transferred to Mycotaxon Ltd as Exe Island Biological Station). The simple cottage and 3-acre island became a favourite holiday destination for their four children and friends.

From my own experience I must say that it is a great place for swimming and diving, sailing and waterskiing, fishing, barbecuing, or just having a good time. Dick organized famous Crazy Eights card tournaments not only on the island but also during several mycological meetings and everyone who has participated remembers having a lot of fun." (Lizoň 2016)



Cover design by Noni Korf

Fig. 32—Dick's tour de force at age 80.

In mid-2007, an audio gem from Dick arrived in the editorial mailbox: his 12-disc audio recording of the epic poem, John Brown's Body. Next fall's solo 1500-mile road trip transformed a welcome gift into one of my most valued possessions. Dick's voice so mesmerized me during my Montana journey to visit my father that I listened to it all over again on my return to Oregon. This tour-de-force grips from the first disc and never bores. The text below has been 'cribbed' from Dick's liner notes and a blog by John Brown's great-great-great-granddaughter.

"This recording was made in 2006, a last gasp of an 80-year-old lifelong actor, the culmination of a 20-year dream. It is dedicated to my actress daughter, Mia Korf, for encouragement, and to my wife, Kumi, for everything.

"I grew up as a ravenous reader, encountering Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body* at the age of 14, I was captivated by the book, which I read and reread over the ensuing sixty-some years. It surely helped form me into an anti-war activist...

"Poetry has a very special place in my heart, and as a youth I began reading and writing poetry. I agree with Stephen Vincent Benét: poetry begs to be read aloud. The skilled poet may embed in his poems frequent 'stage directions' in the choice of typographic tools (punctuation, the use of parentheses, italic typeface, paragraphs, long dashes, indentations), and of course changes in meter or rhyme. Benét's use of these tools simplified my narration of the poem; these are treated here as not only readers' but narrator's guidelines." (Korf 2006)

"Thursday Treasure - Recording of John Brown's Body" (MeCoy 2009):

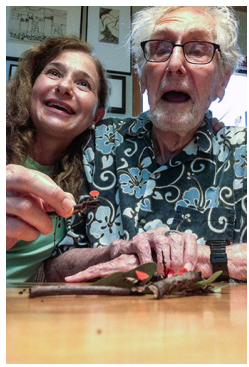
"Over the past 30 years, I have been the recipient of some fascinating letters, emails, FaceBook notifications, and phone calls from people regarding John Brown. One such FaceBook connection occurred in June of this year and resulted in today's featured treasure. Emeritus Professor of Mycology at Cornell University, Richard P. Korf wrote me the following:

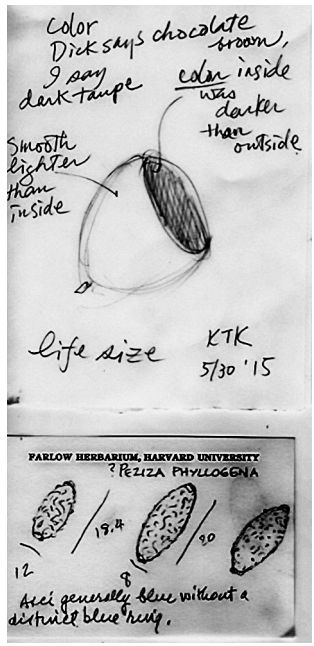
"'I assume you are the lady I read about in an article sent to me by my cousin from her local paper, indicating that you are a great-great-great-granddaughter of John Brown of Harpers Ferry fame. I have a strong connection, in that I was very influenced by the story, and particularly the book-length poem called John Brown's Body by Stephen Vincent Benét, which received the Pulitzer Prize in 1929. Probably you have read it. Oddly enough it never was made into an audio book. I finally discovered that there is a copyright issue, and managed to get permission to do a "not for sale" version (I am now 84, and a lifetime actor) which I recorded in 2006. I have a few copies left and would be happy to send you one (it is on 12 CD discs, 13-1/2 hours long!). You can send me your postal address if so.'

"Think about this, Professor Korf was so enthralled with *John Brown's Body* by Stephen Vincent Benét, that he spent considerable time, effort, and his own money to manufacture 100 limited editions of a 12 CD set that he cannot sell due to copyright regulations.

"I immediately responded that I would be honored to receive one of his recordings. A few days later I received a package in the mail with a professionally packaged, produced set of CDs. Professor Korf's voice is a joy to listen to, and the set is amazing. The front cover of the box features the Stephen Benét

postage stamp, while the back is the 1859 photograph of John Brown with his full beard. Inside each CD is labeled and tucked into its own pocket. ...A truly impressive presentation. It is a shame that due to copyright legalities, Professor Korf is not permitted to offer his incredibly moving rendition of this important work of literature, but I am truly blessed to have received a copy from him. I am holding onto this treasure. When I walk past my bookshelves and see the case, I always think fondly of the Professor whom I have never met, yet he felt inclined to share his lifelong dream with me." (MeCoy 2009)





Kumi's mystery fungus, found at home in August 2015. Fig. 33 (left): Tiny red cups delight Teresa & Dick; Fig. 34 (right): The sketch by Kumi with Don Pfister's annotations added; Fig. 35 (bottom): Dick supervises Teresa's note-taking skills.

Kumi's mystery fungus—Here are some photos (Figs 33–37) of my last visit to Dick in August 2015 when he described and made me take very detailed notes on 'Kumi's fungus'... while he described in detail the most impressive manner how this fungus shattered. When I returned to the Farlow with the specimen, Don [Pfister] immediately looked at it under the microscope, made drawings of the spores (also attached), and identified it to *Peziza phyllogena,* which Korf himself had worked on.

On that visit he impressed me once more with his absolutely keen memory and sense of humor when he told us the story of Schulzer von Muggenbruck, who described twice as new (and from the same specimen) *Peziza heterotropha* Schulzer 1878 and later as a new genus and species, *Strossmayeria rackii* Schulzer 1881 [now listed as *S. basitricha* (Sacc.) Dennis on www.indexfungorum.org].

The holotype of the name of *S. rackii,* along with most of the Schulzer Herbarium, was lost, so Dick decided to undertake an expedition to find a neotype for this fungus and two other type specimens needed to solve some other taxonomic issues with other groups, which we described in detail (Korf & al. 1988).

During such expeditions to collect discomycetes, he taught us how to find these organisms: swimming among leaf litter, staring at little branches, twigs, leaf blades, leaf petioles, in a place where at first nothing could be seen, and as he stated "they'll start winking at you"... and so they did!

Each of those collections was carefully removed from its substrate with a knife—at lunch time he would love to let us know he was opening the only sardine can with the "dung knife"—and placed in a glassine envelope. Rigorous notes were taken of textures, shapes, colors and sizes, and then the magic of examining the microscopic structures started. Looking at the wonders of ascospores, septa, ornamentation, crystals, colors, and the Melzer's reaction took us always late into the night. Sleep was of no concern to Dick when there was so much fun looking at these amazing structures!

And by the way, we did make 50 collections of *Strossmayeria rackii* and thus were able to neotypify this genus.

—Teresa Iturriaga
Data Curator, Microfungi Digitization Project, University of Illinois

Noni Korf

Fig. 36—Teresita and Dick, August 2015

In a subsequent message, Teresita referred to a Vladimir Nabokov poem that so enchanted Dick that he pasted it onto the arm of his microscope. It is only fitting that her fond reminiscence of her friend and former professor conclude with the stanzas from the Russian author & lepidopterist's "On Discovering a Butterfly" that convey the passion of all those longing to reveal Mother Nature's hidden framework.

Smoothly a screw is turned; out of the mist
two ambered hooks symmetrically slope,
or scales like battledores of amethyst
cross the charmed circle of the microscope.

I found it and I named it, being versed
in taxonomic Latin; thus became
godfather to an insect and its first
describer—and I want no other fame.
—Vladimir Nabokov (1943)

Courtesy of Noni Korf

Fig. 37—Dick in the heart of his wife, children, and grandchildren during the annual gathering of the clan (Summer of 2016).

A daughter's farewell

My dad's passing means that there are many untold stories that can no longer be told. Many photographs that can no longer be identified. He was preceded in death by his older brother and his cousin and, at 91, by many his friends, colleagues, and students. I would have liked to hear more stories about his childhood, because looking back there are so many narrative threads that could be followed to their source.

I do know that the publishing of the journal, Mycotaxon, was not his first adventure in publishing. As a child he had a small letterpress at which he set type, printing up a local gossip rag, some stories surely fabricated, which he then sold to his neighbors. It was a novel and entrepreneurial undertaking, quite unlike Mycotaxon but the connection is there.

I remember the genesis of the journal, and the way that my father's eye would light up as he would describe the concept—a journal which allowed authors to publish quickly and for free, that used offset printing technology to shortcut more time intensive and expensive methods of printing, where the journal wasn't responsible for the review process, and where volumes would be issued when they reached a certain number of pages rather than a certain time period. I don't know how novel the journal's "find your own reviewer" peer-review process was, but he told me he heard many stories of authors who were able to get peer-reviews from people that they highly respected and to whom they would not otherwise have dared to communicate.

Then there was all the stuff. We sold special paper that he designed that had two sets of lines margins laid out in light blue ink so that authors could type onto this paper, using either an elite or pica typewriter, and then mail in camera-ready originals. We also sold, and used ourselves, special Letraset dry transfers for numbering photos and creating somewhat consistent arrows, page headers, and other typography. We would receive back from the printer rolls and rolls of acetate which were cut up for reprints, sometimes mailed back to authors if they requested it for them to make their own. And there were so many different sizes of envelopes and boxes for shipping the journal out.

When an issue was published, there would be a stack of some 400 or so brightly colored journals ready to be sent out. We tried many different ways of printing up labels for these and back then we had to sort them all by zip code

Fig. 38—Noni designed this logo years ago for one piece of 'stuff'—the official Mycotaxon t-shirt worn proudly by journal disciples. With our move to online publication in 2011, Noni modified the logo for use on our back covers, beginning with Mycotaxon 115. Dick approved!

Kumi Korf; courtesy of Teresa Iturriaga

Fig. 39—Noni, Dick, and Teresita share a happy moment in August 2015

and country before dropping them at the post office. We made stuffing the envelopes into a game, quizzing each other on the zip codes of certain cities, or the middle names of our subscribers. I knew many, many names and addresses of mycologists by heart, learned of libraries from all over the world, imagined the journal traveling there to be opened by someone who must have wondered why the journals they received were never the same color. It was a game, it was a chore, it was something we all chipped in on 4 times a year. One time I slipped a message into the envelope—it was being shipped to Linda Kohn—and I wrote "help, I'm trapped in a cottage industry!"

Every now and then someone would order a backorder or two, or sometimes even a whole run, and this was a cause for excitement, and more boxing, and M-bags, and international postage. I sometimes thought that the post office was my father's home away from home. He was meticulous in understanding the rules and could read the charts and scales as well as any postmaster. He always tried to stamp the envelopes with the most exotic and fanciful of US postage, in case the recipient was a stamp collector. He had many difficulties with the post office, however, because the journal didn't fit into a certain category of a quarterly publication, so we didn't qualify for 3rd class mail, and ultimately the crushing cost of postage was one of the reasons we found we had to move to publishing online.

As I got older I learned to work on the subscriptions management. At the time this meant gathering checks, stamping them "for deposit only" and entering the payments on 3x5 inch index cards. Some people were individual

subscribers, some were institutional, some we invoiced, some had standing orders, some were organized through companies such as Ebsco. It was all very detailed and precise, and hand written. Once I started doing the subscriptions management I became even better at the box stuffing game of "in what city does mycologist X live?" As this modernized, the job included running credit card slips through the embosser and mailing back receipts. Eventually there were uploads via a dial-up modem. And there were also the odd international money orders, which my father would have to cash at his home away from home, the post office. So many memories of these little details and all the things it took to keep the journal running.

At some point my father embraced the computer, bought a Mac IIe, and began getting fascinated with the computer as both a administrative tool and one useful for authors. I think we were all very tired of typing on that special light-blue lined paper, and needing to use whiteout to make corrections. The early volumes do have the DIY look of a zine, but the computer made submissions of articles and reviewer notes much easier for the author, but also added to the work of the editor. There's no doubt my father loved working at the computer, teaching himself new software, designing forms and databases to track subscriptions, and authoring articles. I can see him in my mind's eye, hunched over the keyboard, using only two fingers to hunt and peck at a maniacal speed as he corrected a manuscript, or communicated with a former student.

The printed word was very important to my father. He was a keen critic of his own writing as well as that of others, helped many people to edit their manuscript and was always on the lookout for readable prose and the proper use of the English language. He would admonish writers to "kill your darlings" and when we were developing the Mycotaxon website, pointed out that I had failed to italicize a period. Before my father died we had a project to pull together all of his writings and bind them together. I regret I wasn't able to complete the project, the reprints were of so many different sizes I couldn't figure out how to put them together. But together we marveled at the stack of pages. Over 400 different publications! I so wish I could have also added to the stack his first published articles, the 1935 gossip rag from White Plains, NY.

I miss my dad, and know he would have edited the hell out of this piece.

Noni Korf
11 January 2017

Ode to RPK

Awake, my Muse, and let us chant again,
for Richard has attained four score and ten,
A life well lived, and never could my song
number the landmarks of a life so long,
so rich, so varied, put to so good use,
for like that busy man, Odysseus,
patient, resourceful, skilled in many arts,
our Richard is a man of many parts:
In lusty youth he journeyed to Japan,
and bore away the fair Kumikosan,
whose beauty lives undimmed, though made to bear
sturdy twin sons, and daughters passing fair.
Master of mushroom lore, taxonomist,
shepherd of mushroom hunters, lengthy list,
whose fungal gleanings will survive the ages
in Mycotaxon's printer-ready pages.
A scientist, a teacher wise and stern,
his life will sometimes take a different turn;
he is no stranger to the sacred rage,
that brings forth sound and fury on the stage;
sailor intrepid, always northward bound,
until one happy day he ran aground,
and entered on the hero's life we know,
lord of the wooded isle in Big Rideau.
There let us leave him, Muse, for you grow faint;
a full length portrait genius alone could paint.
Let's be content to let our rhyming cease,
a gift of love, though not a masterpiece,
a song with but a simple tale to tell:
Richard, we honor you, and love you well.

—Peter Wetherbee
in honor of Dick's 90th birthday, 2015

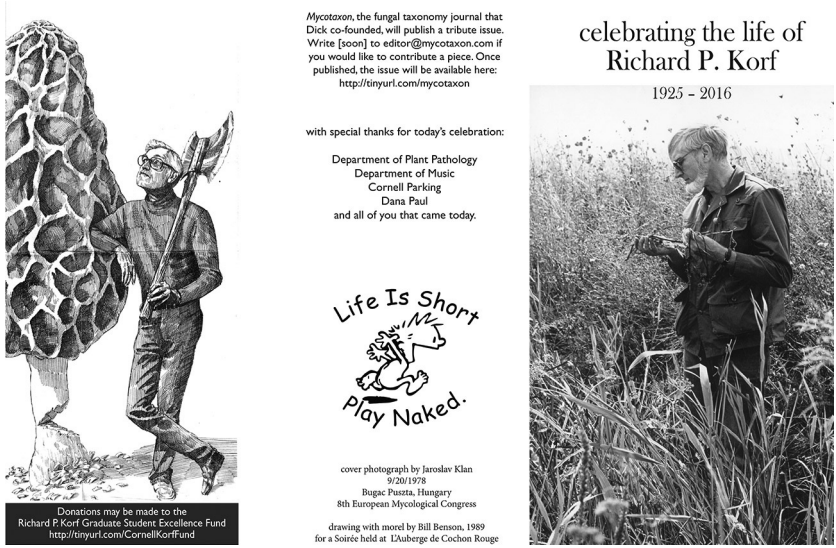

Donations may be made to the
Richard P. Korf Graduate Student Excellence Fund
http://tinyurl.com/CornellKorfFund
Mycotaxon, the fungal taxonomy journal that Dick co-founded, will publish a tribute issue. Write [soon] to editor@mycotaxon.com if you would like to contribute a piece. Once published, the issue will be available here: http://tinyurl.com/mycotaxon
with special thanks for today's celebration:
Department of Plant Pathology
Department of Music
Cornell Parking
Dana Paul
and all of you that came today.
Life Is Short
Play Naked.
cover photograph by Jaroslav Klan
9/20/1978
Bugac Puszta, Hungary
8th European Mycological Congress
drawing with mored by Bill Benson, 1989
for a Soirée held at L'Auberge de Cochon Rouge
celebrating the life of
Richard P. Korf
1925 - 2016

Fig. 40—On December 18, 2016, the Korf family hosted a celebration of Dick's Life at Cornell. The back of the program above provided the liner notes from Dick's audio book version of John Brown's Body and his obituary, featuring the 1972 photo of Dick at the Plant Path lab blackboard. Scheduled speakers included daughters Noni & Mia Korf, students Don Pfister & Kathie Hodge, sons Mario & Ian Korf, and grand-daughter Maïa Korf followed by memories shared at an open mic during the reception on stage. Not surprisingly, festiities continued well into the evening at Noni's place.

Acknowledgments

Many have contributed to this celebration, but special editorial thanks are due Noni Korf, who has borne much during the past year yet agreed to serve as family liaison and scribe in addition to Mycotaxon web-master while holding down a fulltime new job. We both thank everyone who shared memories and photos in this memoriam: Francisco Calaça, Rafael Castañeda, David Hawksworth, Kevin Hyde, Satoshi Inoue, Teresita Iturriaga, Michael Loizides Hannes Maddens, Scott LaGreca, Pavel Lizoň, Tom May, Rosario Medel, David Miner, Ron Petersen, Scott Redhead, Jack Rogers, Amy Rossman, Tony Whalley, and Wen-ying Zhuang. We also thank Pedro Crous, David Hawksworth, Manon van den Hoeven-Verweij, Pavel Lizoň, Amy Rossman, and Wen-ying Zhuang for granting permission to reprint excerpts from IMA Fungus.

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Fig. 41. Watkins Glen State Park, NY

Excuse me, while I disappear.

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